United Nations S/2016/33

Security Council

Distr.: General
13 January 2016

Original: English

Letter dated 12 January 2016 from the Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to transmit to you the attached letter from the National Coalition of Syrian Revolution and Opposition Forces (see annex).

I would be most grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Matthew **Rycroft**

16-00419 (E) 150116

Please recycle

Annex to the letter dated 12 January 2016 from the Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

On behalf of the Syrian opposition, I wish to convey our united commitment to ending the crisis in Syria, protecting innocent civilians and achieving the political solution that the Syrian people need. Over the course of the past four years, the Syrian opposition has worked to put an end to the senseless violence perpetrated by the Assad regime and to achieve justice for all Syrians.

Our goal during the Syrian crisis has been consistent: we demand an end to the indiscriminate killing in Syria by the Assad regime and his foreign enablers — Russia, Iran and Hizbullah — as well as extremist terrorist groups such as Daesh, whose collective crimes have cost the lives of over 300,000 Syrians, displaced half of the country and left more than 13.5 million Syrians in need of humanitarian aid.

We welcome the intensification of diplomatic activity to end the Syrian crisis, including efforts by the International Syria Support Group and the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Syria to secure a nationwide ceasefire and a political process leading to a credible, democratic and inclusive government.

As you know, from 8 to 10 December 2015, members of Syria's opposition, representing all ethnic and religious groups in Syria, including men and women, as well as armed groups on the ground, met in Riyadh to form a unified opposition negotiating body. We reaffirmed our commitment to a fully representative and united Syria that reflects Syria's rich ethnic and religious diversity. We sought the membership and equal participation of all groups and individuals who:

- Share a commitment to a democratic, pluralistic Syria based on the rule of law, in which all Syrians are equal regardless of their gender, ethnic, religious or sectarian background;
- Agree that Syria's unity, independence and territorial integrity are fundamental and that functional Syrian institutions remain intact;
- Endorse the Geneva Communiqué, the objective of which is the formation by mutual consent of a transitional governing body with full executive powers, including over security, military and intelligence structures, as stipulated by the Security Council in its resolution 2118 (2013);
- Agree that extremist terrorist groups such as Daesh must be degraded and defeated.

The result was the single most united and representative Syrian opposition to date. Our members now include representatives of the Northern Front, the Southern Front, Jaish al-Islam, the National Coalition of Syrian Revolution and Opposition Forces, the National Coordination Committee for Democratic Change, local councils and independent activists. Our members include representatives of all components of Syrian society, including Alawites, Christians, Druze, Kurds and other components of Syrian society. Our members are capable of reaching a political settlement to end the crisis and the killing in Syria, and they are the best equipped to implement such a settlement.

But we will not achieve peace in Syria or eradicate Daesh while innocent civilians are being bombed indiscriminately, starved into submission and detained, tortured and killed in Assad's prisons. If peace is to hold and a ceasefire to be agreed, Syrians need clear guarantees that civilian protection will be at the forefront of the political process. Syrians need urgent steps to:

(a) Protect Syrian civilians by stopping the indiscriminate air strikes that are the foremost killer of Syrian civilians, responsible for 69 per cent of civilian deaths in December 2015;

(b) Lift the sieges of Madaya and elsewhere that have trapped more than 500,000 Syrians, and ensure the delivery of urgently needed humanitarian assistance and medical care;

(c) Release political prisoners, more than 100,000 of whom are being detained and tortured in Assad regime prisons.

We are committed to the full implementation of the Geneva Communiqué of June 2012, the Vienna Communiqué of October 2015 and Security Council resolutions 2118 (2013), 2139 (2014), 2165 (2014), 2191 (2014), 2209 (2015), 2254 (2015) and 2258 (2015), and we look forward to working constructively with your Office and the Special Envoy for Syria to save lives in Syria and achieve a political solution to the crisis.

(*Signed*) Najib **Ghadbian**
Special Representative to the United Nations
Member of the General Assembly of the Riyadh Conference